

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1126

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL NICE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MARSEILLE 0027

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB PINT MMOL FR

SUBJECT: UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN THE MIDI

1. RECENTLY PUBLISHED FIGURES AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES IN THE LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON AND PROVENCE-COTE D'AZUR REGIONS HAVE IMPRESSED LOCAL POLITICIANS AND MAN ON THE STREET WITH SERIOUSNESS OF UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION. SPECIAL REPORT IN "MIDI LIBRE" (MONTPELLIER) STATES ONE WAGE EARNER IN SEVEN IS NOW AFFECTED IN LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON WITH TOTAL OF JOBLESS OVER 50,000. OFFICIAL INFORMATION BULLETIN OF THE "BUREAU REGIONAL SOCIAL" (PROVENCE-COTE D'AZUR) FOR FOURTH QUARTER OF 1975 LISTS 80,000 UNFILLED JOB APPLICATIONS AGAINST 70,859 IN JUNE 1975.

2. VINTNER UNREST IN LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON AND CUTBACK IN STEEL PRODUCTION AND METALWORKING INDUSTRIES OF BOUCHES-DU-RHONE HAVE AGGRAVATED REGIONAL SITUATION AND PROVIDED ANTI-GOVERNMENT AMMUNITION TO COMMUNIST PARTY AND CGT. COMMUNIST DAILY "LA MARSEILLAISE" OF JANUARY 19 CLAIMED 50,000 UNEMPLOYED IN BOUCHES-DU-RHONE ALONE AND ATTACKED "ARBITRARY" REDUCTION IN WORK HOURS BY SOLMER (STEEL PRODUCTION) AND OTHER LOCAL FIRMS.

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3. REGIONAL PREFET PIERRE SOMVEILLE ACKNOWLEDGED SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION DURING RECENT CONVERSATION AND SAID CRISIS WAS PARTICULARLY ACUTE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP 48 PERCENT OF UNEMPLOYED. HE STATED THE ONLY TWO IMPORTANT LOCAL INDUSTRIES NOT EXPERIENCING CUTBACKS AND PERSONNEL PROBLEMS ARE SNIAS (AEROSPATIALE) AT MARIGNANE AND SHIPBUILDING YARDS AT LA CIOTAT. SNIAS, WITH 6,900 EMPLOYEES, REFLECTS IMPORTANCE OF FRANCE'S ARMS EXPORT INDUSTRY, PRODUCING WIDE VARIETY OF MILITARY HELICOPTERS (LE LAMA, LA GAZELLE, LE PUMA, LE SUPER FRELON, LE WESTLAND ETC.) WITH APPROXIMATELY 86 PERCENT OF ITS PRODUCTION DESTINED FOR FOREIGN SALES. THE SHIPYARDS AT LA CIOTAT ARE CURRENTLY WORKING AT CAPACITY BUT THE CGT CLAIMS THAT NO CONSTRUCTION ORDERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BEYOND 1980 AND PREDICTS A SLUMP. PREFET SOMEVEILLE HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT 1977 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MAY PUT A COMMUNIST MAYOR IN LA CIOTAT, A DEVELOPMENT HE FEELS WILL INCREASE LOCAL LABOR PROBLEMS AND POLITICAL TENSIONS.

SIMPSON

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